

Message Text

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ACTION DHA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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/082 W

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R 021036Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5814
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL SONGKHLA
AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19602

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, TH
SUBJ: RTG POLICY WITH REGARD TO REFUGEES

REF: BANGKOK 19486

1. IN A FOLLOW-UP TO THE CHARGE'S MEETING SEPTEMBER 1 WITH INTERIOR MINISTER SAMAK (REFTEL), BARNES HAD SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS SEPTEMBER 2 WITH DAMRONG SUNTHONSARATHUN, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR; MAJOR GENERAL PUANGCHALOEI ANIRUTH-DEVA, DIRECTOR, COORDINATION CENTER 114; AND COL. KAMON PRAJUAPMO, DEPUTY TO DAMRONG. PUANGCHALOEI SAID THAT THE THAI CHARGE IN VIENTIANE WAS NEGOTIATING THE RETURN TO LAOS OF THE 69 RECENT ARRIVALS IN NONG KHAI. THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO SHOW THE RLG THAT THE RTG WILL NOT PERMIT SORT OF EXODUS FROM LAOS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE THAI WILL NOT FORCIBLY REPATRIATE THE 69 BECAUSE THE INDIVIDUALS MIGHT BE SHOT ON RETURN.

2. KAMON BEWAILED THE THAI DILEMMA AT NONG KHAI. HE FAVORED TAKING STRONG ACTION BUT REALIZED THAT THERE WOULD BE INTER-
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NATIONAL OUTRAGE IF THE INDIVIDUALS SUFFERED VIOLENCE ON THEIR RETURN. DAMRONG WAS EVASIVE ON THE ISSUE OF BOAT CASE ESCAPEES FROM VIETNAM, WHOM HE DECLINES TO CLASSIFY AS REFUGEES, BUT STATED THAT THAI HOSPITALITY WOULD DEPEND ON THE SIZE OF THE BOAT. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE REFUGEE SITUATION AND CRITERIA IN DETAIL WITH BARNES UPON DAMRONG'S RETURN FROM SINGAPORE THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 12.

3. COMMENT: FACED WITH ALMOST 90,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THE COUNTRY AND THE RECENT DAYLIGHT CROSSING OF THE MEKONG FROM LAOS, THE THAI FIND THEMSELVES IN AN INTRACTABLE SITUATION. WE ARE CONTINUING OUR CALM ITERATION AT EVERY REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR HOSPITALITY TO REFUGEES ARRIVING IN SMALL BOATS BY SEA, AND THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF FORCIBLE REPATRIATION. OUR CONSUL IN UDORN REPORTS NO CHANGE IN THE NONG KHAI SITUATION AS OF 1600 SEPTEMBER 2.
O'DONOHUE

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